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FROM

Rev. Edw. Abbott





Gray

PROGRESS AND ROBBERY

AN ANSWER TO

HENRY GEORGE,

THE DEMI-COMMUNIST.

J. BLEECKER MILLER.

PROGRESS and ROBBERY

AND

PROGRESS and JUSTICE

AN ANSWER TO

HENRY GEORGE

THE DEMI-COMMUNIST

BY

J. BLEECKER MILLER.

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Rev. Edw. Abbott,
Cambridge.

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CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|------------------------------------|------|
| A PROPERTY OWNER'S ANSWER, - - - - | 5 |
| A BUSINESS MAN'S ANSWER, - - - - | 27 |
| A WORKINGMAN'S ANSWER, - - - - | 37 |
| PROGRESS AND JUSTICE, - - - - | 53 |

The following addresses were delivered before the
YOUNG MEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF NEW YORK,
during the late HEWITT-GEORGE Campaign.

PROGRESS AND ROBBERY.

THREE AMERICAN ANSWERS TO HENRY GEORGE.

A PROPERTY-OWNER'S ANSWER.

The candidacy of Mr. Henry George for the mayoralty is in one way peculiar and appears to me to demand a different treatment in this Club, from the usual mere indorsement or refusal to indorse.

Mr. George is known personally to but few of our citizens ; it is only through his books that we can obtain information as to his character, sympathies and intellectual ability. As most of the members of this Club are busy men, and yet must desire to be informed on this subject, I thought it might be acceptable, if I submitted to you the result of my examination of his works, especially as it will consist largely in quotations, showing his opinions on the salient points of his theory.

Mr. George, moreover, represents an idea ;—for no one can deny that but for his book on “Progress and Poverty” he would not have been nominated for this office. He is not nominated merely because it is believed that he will make a good administrative officer, but because it is hoped that his election will in some way conduce to the realization of a whole theory of political economy, applicable not only to our City, but to the State and Nation. That this theory is of sufficient importance to deserve the careful consideration of this Club, is evidenced, I consider, by the general interest which this nomination of its representative has excited among all citizens.

Among the masses of the people every one knows that a large number of persons who have heretofore voted the Democratic ticket are considering whether they will not vote for Mr. George, or have already made up their minds so to do; it is the same with the Republicans.

The manner in which he has been nominated is another matter which should attract the attention of this Club. He has not been nominated by politicians; but by a great class of our population; he represents in many ways a revolt against present political methods; he is brought forward by a combination of organizations whose entrance in the field of politics has long been looked forward to by our citizens with mingled feelings of desire and dread; he has been placed at the head of a force whose movements statesmen and politicians have long been studying and prognosticating, and which, whatever may be the result of this election, will remain a power for good or evil in the political horizon for a long time to come, which both political parties will have to consider in their calculations, and which may be so strong as to retain permanently the elements that may be attracted to it from either party in this campaign. What theories then does the standard-bearer of this new movement represent?

It seems to me that this Club should look this matter in the face at once, and consider whether the principles, which Henry George represents, vary from the teachings of Democracy, and whether there is anything that prevents a Democrat from supporting him as a candidate.

Even if these questions were not forced upon us at this time, the examination of the doctrines taught in "Progress and Poverty" appear to me to be a fitting subject for our careful consideration, whether we are inclined to approve or disapprove of them, in view of the great spread which this book has attained both in this country and in England. In this country over a hundred editions are said to have

been printed, and it has been translated, I believe, into all the languages of Europe. Learned societies have debated its theories and clubs have been formed to put them into practice. Very few books can boast of the reception of this work,—or of having immediately influenced so many minds in its favor. Another reason for considering this work is that it is necessary in order to understand the full and correct meaning of the platform adopted by the Trade and Labor Organizations of New York, and on which Mr. George stands.

The first section condemns "the system which compels men to pay their fellow-creatures for the use of God's gifts to all," although it does not define what that "system" is; and the second section states that "we aim at the abolition of all laws which give to any class of citizens advantages either judicial, financial, industrial or political, that are not equally shared by all others,"—but the statutes referred to are not cited. This platform was adopted after the receipt of a letter from Mr. George in which he promised conditionally to accept the nomination, and as it is understood that he has virtually accepted it, we can go safely to his works to ascertain the meaning which he, at all events, puts upon this language, and which he will consider himself justified to follow in his official acts, if elected. And no one can deny that a vote for Henry George will be construed as an indorsement to some extent of his theories. What is this system and what are these laws which are to be abolished?

Mr. George has certainly been straight-forward and consistent; in his four books: "Progress and Poverty," "Social Problems," "The Irish Land Question" and "Protection and Free Trade," he emits no uncertain sound.

As the Roman Senator, when suddenly awakened, exclaimed: "*Carthago delenda est*," so Mr. George would, I believe, in similar circumstances exclaim in the final words

of his closing chapter in "Protection and Free Trade:" "Private property in land is doomed."

It is this cry with which he first startled the world in "Progress and Poverty": "We must therefore substitute for the individual ownership of land a common ownership. We must make land common property," p. 295.

In his "Social Problems" he says, on page 276: "There is no escape from it. We must make land common property."

In the "Land Question" he states: "In the very nature of things, land cannot rightfully be made individual property. This principle is absolute," p. 38.

It is therefore this system of private ownership of land, and the laws which sustain this system, which the delegates of the Trade and Labor Organizations of New York, in conference assembled, declare it to be their aim to abolish, and as the first step in that direction, they have nominated Mr. George for Mayor of New York City. And no one can deny that if this was their object, they have made a wise choice in their standard-bearer. He gives not merely an intellectual assent to the proposition, but no one can doubt his thorough sincerity and fiery zeal.

His work entitled "Protection and Free Trade," published in 1886 is as outspoken in its denunciations as his "Progress and Poverty," written in 1877.

In the former he says: "Property in land is as indefensible as property in man," (p. 349) and "the robber that takes all that is left is private property in land," (p. 285); in the later he says: "If chattel slavery be unjust then is private property in land unjust," (p. 312). In his "Land Question" he says, on page 36: "Here is a system which robs the producers of wealth as remorselessly and far more regularly and systematically than the pirate robs the merchantman."

In his "Social Problems" he says: "Did you ever see a pail of swill given to a pen of hungry hogs? That is human society as it is," (p. 102).

And, indeed, extravagant as this language may sound, when one reads the sombre pages on which he paints the horrors and misery of poverty and contrasts it with the extravagance of wealth, in language and with pathos, which has been rarely surpassed, one feels more than half inclined to adopt Mr. George's plan or any measure, no matter how radical, if there was only some prospect of improvement.

But Mr. George does not confine himself to an appeal to our sentiments; he recognizes, of course, that no matter how readily we agree as to the misery and unjustifiable inequality now existing, he must still show that his proposed remedy will lead to an improvement, and also that it can be adopted without acting contrary to the precepts of justice.—Thus, he says in his "Progress and Poverty": "If private property in land be just, then is the remedy I propose a false one; if on the contrary, private property in land be unjust, then is this remedy the true one," (p. 299.)

As to the justice of ownership of things other than land Mr. George is pronounced; in his "Social Problems," he says, on page 278: "What more preposterous than the treatment of land as individual property? In every essential land differs from those things which being the product of human labor are rightfully property. It is the creation of God; they are produced by man."

It is on this distinction that he bases his whole system. In his chapter entitled "Injustice of private property in land," he says (p. 307): "The right to exclusive ownership of anything of human production is clear. No matter how many the hands through which it has passed, there was at the beginning of the line human labor—some one who, having procured or produced it by his exertions, had to it a clear title as against all the rest of mankind, and which could justly pass from one to another by sale or gift. But at the end of what string of conveyances or grants can be shown or supposed a like title to any part of the material universe?"

I think that such a title can be shown to every piece of land in the State of New York fit for human use.

There is no reason for the division between personal and real property, on the ground that the former is the product of man and the latter created by God. God created personal property as certainly as he did real. As Mr. George says in his "Social Problems" (p. 182): "Man has no power to bring something out of nothing. He cannot create an atom of matter."

Man can fashion things after they are detached from the soil, and combine them, so that they will affect every one of our senses in a new manner; but is any such change greater than that from a piece of the forest primeval to a Fifth Avenue lot?

Did it require no labor to drain the swamps, cut the trees and blast the rocks on this Island of Manhattan, before it assumed its present form, which Mr. George and his friends are now content to assume as their place of residence? Was not similar work required on every field in the State? Ask a farmer, who has reduced a ten-acre lot to an arable condition, or the builder, who has blasted the rock from a city lot, whether Mr. George is correct when he says, in his "Social Problems," on page 85: "When land increases in value it does not mean that its owner has added to the general wealth."

According to Mr. George's own definitions, land can be held as property, because it is no more fit for human use without human labor, than any piece of personal property, and it is as senseless to say of one part of the material universe it can be produced by man without God, as it is of any other.

It is true that Mr. George does not overlook this point of human labor connected with land, but he says on the page last cited: "It is a title only to the improvements and not to the land itself." Should he not then also

say the same thing concerning a diamond, for instance, which a lapidary has cut and polished: "All I can justly claim is the value given by these exertions. They give me no right to the diamond itself." And yet Mr. George claims that as to personal property one can have ownership.

Quote to the same farmer or builder the definition of property, as given in this chapter under consideration, "As a man belongs to himself, so his labor when put in concrete form belongs to him," and ask him whether he does not think that the definition would entitle him to claim property in the lot as much as in the wood or the stone which he removes from it, and it would take even more than Mr. George's ingenuity to get a negative answer from him.

We are not now arguing the question of compensation for improvements, which we will consider later, but examining the correctness of the distinction which Mr. George makes between property in land and property in other things. If there be no such broad distinction, as to require that the former should be taken and the latter left, as Mr. George so earnestly demands, the question of compensation, in case we should take the land, need not be considered. Unless this radical difference be proven, he might with equal propriety discuss in his book the compensation to be given for improvements to personal property. Having thus, in my opinion, shown that Mr. George's distinction between personal property, as the product of man, and real property, as the creation of God, is untenable, and that consequently his whole theory is indefensible, as he has expressly based it on this claim to justice, let us briefly consider the question of justice, without reference to Mr. George's book.

How long has this work been going on in this State and City before they acquired a form, which induces Mr. George and his friends to take up their abode therein and even to desire to have an interest in it? Where were these gentlemen or their ancestors during the two centuries during

which this struggle with animate and inanimate foes was going on? Did they take part in the Indian wars? Did they fight at Saratoga, or endure the horrors of the seven years' war? Did they struggle for municipal rights against the New Netherlands Company, or assist in planning the Constitution of 1777? Were not their ancestors the men who staid comfortably in Europe until America was prepared and put in order—until the human, animal and material foes were overcome, and now that a passage can be made in a week, and steerage fares cost perhaps twenty dollars—which is often advanced to them by Americans—they sail over here and, not satisfied with our broad naturalization laws, then complain: "American citizenship confers no right to American soil," (Social Problems, p. 146). The Report of the Charity Organization Society (which Mr. George cites to prove the existing misery) shows that over 80 per cent. of beggars, whose cases were investigated, were not born in America.

No matter how absurd this claim may now seem to us, it is one deserving of careful attention—in fact, is not to be wondered at: our Saxon ancestors once did the same thing and thus gained their English homes. It was the Britons who invited the Saxons over from the Continent to fight the Picts, and supported them and took them into their pay, until they finally so increased in number that they took possession of the land of their former employers. Human nature has not changed very much, and that they come over in Cunarders, instead of in dragon ships or coracles, does not make their demand for the land of the former inhabitants essentially different. I believe that the true character of this movement, which is just beginning, should be understood by our real estate owners and their friends, so that the contest shall be a fair and open one, and that the leaders of neither side shall increase their forces or diminish that of their adversary by false pretenses of justice, disinterestedness, etc.

If one wished to descend to his style of language could not the terms "robber" and "pirate" be flung back with perfect propriety?

I happen to have the correspondence of James Duane (an ancestor of mine), who settled the township of Duanesburgh, in Schenectady County, with his agents, extending from about 1770 to 1790. I would like to show that correspondence to anyone who claims that land is the free gift of God to man and can be used like air and water, without the expenditure of labor. Mr. Duane spent the proceeds of a large professional income, together with what was, in those days, considerable inherited property, upon building roads, dams, mills, etc., through that region, so as to make it accessible to his tenants; he advanced them money, as is shown by the continual begging letters, all of them implying confidence in his generosity or gratitude for his assistance; there is not one implying any dislike or harsh feeling; a great part of the letters consist in explanations by the agent why the various tenants did not meet their obligations, or requests for money to carry out improvements or maintain those already begun, which seemed very liable to dilapidation. After representing the State of New York in every Congress during the Revolutionary War, and serving as first Mayor of this City after the war, until the Union was formed, and then as first Judge of the United States District Court of New York, he gave up the latter position, and moved up there and devoted himself entirely to care of this land until his death. Would he have done this, if his descendants were to have had no interest in what was then a wilderness? And if he had not done it, how long would that land have remained uncultivated?

I believe that the history of any portion of this State, if known, would be very much the same; and if any one will consult one of the latest books on the history of land, "The English Village Community," by Frederic Seebohm

(London, 1883), he will see that in England the theory of an original cultivation of the land by a community of independent farmers (on which, on page 331 of "Progress and Poverty," Mr. George bases his historical argument) is a myth, and that the new land was then also settled by some man of means advancing to dependents the subsistence and implements required during the hard struggle of rendering land arable. Mr. Seebohm says in his conclusion (p. 438) on the village land system: "The equality in its yardlands, and the single succession which preserved this equality, we have found to be apparently not marks of an original freedom, not of an original allodial allotment on the German mark system, but of a settled serfdom under a lordship—a semi-servile tenancy implying a mere usufruct, theoretically only for life or at will, and carrying with it no inherent rights of inheritance. But this serfdom, as we have seen reason to believe, was, to the masses of the people, not a degradation, but a step upward out of a once more general slavery. Certainly during the 1200 years over which the direct English evidence extends, the tendency has been towards more and more freedom." And Mr. Seebohm implies that the same facts probably existed in other early agricultural communities. Mr. George based his views solely on what he saw in the Great West, where prairies are said to be almost ready for the plow with but little preliminary labor; and upon the rapid increase of real estate values in California, consequent upon the discovery of gold. From these extraordinary circumstances he has evolved a theory which he believes to be of general application and to which he still adheres, although his subsequent travels and education might have been expected to have widened and corrected his views on this plain matter of history.

He says, in page 83 of his "Social Studies: "When land increases in value it does not mean that its owner has added to the general wealth. . . . Increase of land values simply

means that the owners, by virtue of appropriation of something that existed before man was, have the power of taking a larger share of the wealth produced by other people's labor." However applicable these remarks may be to other parts of the country, and though they may show that the laws concerning the pre-emption of different kinds of public lands should have varied, they do not apply to this State, with its comparatively rugged soil and thick woods.

What have real estate owners done for the State of New York? Under the Constitution of 1777, only those in the possession of land could vote, and to the Senate only landowners were admitted. It was the landowners of New York who enabled that State to meet every requisition made upon it by the Continental Congress for supplies, men and money—the only one of the thirteen States of which that can be said.

After forty years, the landowners peaceably of their own accord gave up this privilege, and established practically universal suffrage, through the Constitutional Convention of 1826, although there were even then men who foresaw the future. Thus Chancellor Kent said, on page 115 of "Proceedings:"

"It is to protect this important class of the community that the Senate should be preserved. It should be the representative of the landed interest, and its security against the caprice of the motley assemblage of paupers, emigrants, journeymen manufacturers, and those undefinable classes of inhabitants which a State and city like ours is calculated to invite. This is not a fancied alarm.

Universal suffrage jeopardizes property, and puts it into the power of the poor and profligate to control the affluent."

He was answered by Mr. Root: "We have no different estates having different interests, necessary to be guarded from encroachment by the watchful eye of jealousy . . . We are all the same estate, all commoners . . . These powerful

checks may be necessary between different families possessing adverse interests, but can never be salutary among brothers of the same family, whose interests are similar," (p. 116.)

What would have been the action of that Convention, if Mr. George's language had been heard in it? Would he and his friends now be voters? Does he subscribe to the honeyed phrases of that advocate of universal suffrage, or are those former "brothers" now called robbers and pirates, among whom must be included of course Washington, Franklin, Madison, Jackson and probably every name which Americans have been taught to revere.

I would pass now from the main point of Mr. George's theory, assuming that it has appeared that Mr. George's distinction between real and personal property is baseless, and that property in the one is as sacred as in the other, and that consequently the question of compensation for improvements on land, taken by the public, will not arise, because the land may not be taken. But in order to give a more complete view of Mr. George's theory, let us consider for a moment his plan for compensation.

He assumes that there are two kinds of improvements to land, for one of which only compensation is to be made.

He says on page 308 of "Progress and Poverty:" "There are improvements which in time become indistinguishable from the land itself. Very well; then the title to the improvements becomes blended with the title to the land; the individual right is lost in the common right."

But he says this in the chapter on "injustice of private property in land," in which he has undertaken to show that this common right exists according to the principles of justice; and yet here he assumes that it is already proven and justified, to the negation of the right even of compensation for improvements.—This is a fair specimen of the logical mind of our would-be future Mayor.

But what are these "indistinguishable" improvements; the term is rather vague. Naturally one would suppose that it would include the results of the first attempts to render wild land fit for cultivation or habitation; such as the building of roads, bridges and dams in agricultural lands, and clearing away the stones and other objects, which impede cultivation; and in the city, levelling the ground, making the necessary excavations, etc.—I do not know what else can be intended by these "indistinguishable" improvements.

I would not ask Mr. George whether this is fair or honest, but I would ask him whether it is consistent with giving compensation for any improvements?

Houses and barns, I suppose, would be improvements, if any thing would, whose value is distinguishable from that of the land; but why should the labor spent on the erection of the building be compensated, and not that spent on the preparation of the site or digging the foundation?

The real object of this distinction between these two classes of improvements appears to be to form a loop-hole through which Mr. George can creep, whenever he is pressed on this point, so as to suit the wishes of his interlocutor. But his real spirit with which he would select the "indistinguishable" improvements is shown plainly enough throughout his works. He says in his "Land Question," on page 38: "I have dwelt so long upon this question of compensating landowners, not merely because it is of great practical importance, but because its discussion brings clearly into view the principles upon which the land question in Ireland, or in any other country, can alone be justly and finally settled. In the light of these principles we see that the landowners have no rightful claim either to the ~~land~~ ^{land} or to compensation for its resumption by the people, and, further than that, we see that no such rightful claim can ever be created. It would be wrong to pay the present landowners for "their" land at the expense of the people."

On page 36 he says: "Yet we are told. . . .that this system cannot be abolished without buying off those who profit by it. Was there ever more degrading debasement before a fetish?"

Moreover, who would pay for these improvements, if any were paid for? It would be one landowner who would pay the other, for he contemplates the abolition of all other taxes. He says, on page 281 of "Social Problems:" "Were land treated as the property of the whole people, the ground rent accruing to the community would suffice for public purposes and all other taxation might be dispensed with." Literally his greatest advance towards compensating the landowners consists in robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The last point in Mr. George's theories to which I think it necessary to refer, is his proposed method of accomplishing his great reforms. He says, on page 364 of "Progress and Poverty:" "I do not propose either to purchase or to confiscate private property in land. The first would be unjust; the second, needless.We may safely leave them the shell if we take the kernel. *It is not necessary to confiscate land; it is only necessary to confiscate rent.*We already take some rent in taxation. We have only to make some changes in our modes of taxation to take it all." The naiveté of these remarks is refreshing. "Taking property" has a bad name in civilized countries; even professed criminals prefer to avoid it, and to speak of divided the stuff, the boodle or the swag. But if Mr. George thinks that anyone is deceived by this use of terms, it shows that he has great simplicity of mind. Of course this would make the city or the State the landlord, with the accompanying duties and responsibilities; how they would be fulfilled it is needless to explain to gentlemen so well acquainted with the present workings of our government, as the members of this Club. Mr. George says, on page 410: "Government would change its character and would be-

come the administration of a great co-operative society. It would become merely the agency by which the common property was administered for the common benefit."

As to the manner in which the money is to be spent and the benefits to be derived therefrom, Mr. George gives glowing pictures. The Reverend Heber Newton summed the matter up in his speech at the so-called Business Men's Meeting of last week, when he said: "We are going to clear the way for the millenium." Mr. George describes, in his "Social Problems," on page 323, the ordinary farmer, living "with a daily average of two or three hours' work, which more resembled healthy recreation than toil;" that his family "should be able to visit the theatre, or concert or opera as often as they cared to, and occasionally to make trips to other parts of the country or to Europe."

In his argument in favor of free trade, which he also claims can be brought about only through the appropriation of all land, he says, on page 334 of "Protection and Free Trade:" "An English Democrat puts in this phrase the aim of true Free Trade: 'No taxes at all, and a pension to everybody.' If this is Socialism, then it is time that Free Trade leads to Socialism."

Is this the language of a practical man?

We have not time here for me to undertake to show the hopelessness of any real improvement of the condition of the workingmen through these theories; I would refer you to the criticisms by Mr. John Rae in "Contemporary Socialism" and to Mr. Mallock's book on this subject; but I would call your attention to this fact, that in his earlier work he promised the Millenium, if his plan were adopted. Thus he says in "Progress and Poverty," on page 295: "To extirpate poverty....we must therefore substitute for the individual ownership of land a common ownership." But in his later book, "Social Problems," he says on page 273: "Yet we might recognize the equal right

to the land and tyranny and spoliation be continued, . . . I fully recognize the fact that even after we do this, much will remain to do."

Would it not be well to wait until his plan is complete, before pulling down our present dwelling? How much more "will remain to do," before his glowing phantasies are to become realities? Does this uncertain prophet deserve to be followed by the workingmen into a conflict with the great class of real estate owners and their friends?

I would further call attention to this fact that Mr. George's arguments are nothing new. They bear a strong resemblance to those of Proudhon in his book entitled: "*Qu'est ce que la Propriété?*" to which he answers: "Property is theft." Proudhon claimed that property in movables was as wrong as property in land,—but another Frenchman, Considerant, attempted to draw the same distinctions which Mr. George has drawn between real and personal property, and prove the lawfulness of the latter. Mr. George and Considerant also use very much the same arguments.

Nowhere, however, that I can find, does Mr. George cite Considerant; although he is evidently familiar with French writers, as he has dedicated his "Protection and Free Trade" "to the memory of those illustrious Frenchmen of a century ago, Quesnay, Turgot, Mirabeau, Condorcet, Dupont and their fellows, who in night of despotism foresaw the glories of the coming day." Mr. George then proceeds to argue in favor of abolition of property in land,—without mentioning Considerant. It is, of course, possible that Mr. George has so superficially studied this subject that he did not hear of the writings of that author, and that the resemblance in the arguments is purely accidental. It is as probable that a man writing on electricity should not have heard the name of Benjamin Franklin, or on abolition of slavery and should not have heard the name of Abraham Lincoln. But be this as it

may, there is nothing new in Mr. George's arguments; they have been promulgated half a century ago by unprincipled Frenchmen in a dozen ways, and the Paris Commune was an attempt to realize them.

If we draw a conclusion as to Mr. George's character from these works, can we conclude anything except that his mind is that of an illogical, unpractical and dangerous fanatic?

At all times progress has had to be on its guard against robbery. We have seen what the system and the laws are which this platform demands shall be abolished. It is true that the Mayor is supposed to be an administrative officer; but cannot the Mayor of New York do something to carry out these principles? In the first place he is a member of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, which has the power, practically without limitation, of determining the amount of money to be raised each year by taxation. This Board consists of four members; one of them, the President of the Department of Taxes and Assessments, is appointed by the Mayor. Should a vacancy occur in that office, the Mayor might appoint a friend entertaining his views, and they would have one-half the Board. But without that, the tax levy can only be fixed by the unanimous vote of all the four members on each item; every member can veto any item, unless he is satisfied with the appropriation as a whole. Mr. George can, therefore, demand that an immense sum should be raised next year by taxation, or he might by refusing to agree with any items cripple the entire city government. That his power would be immense, of that there can be no doubt.

The Mayor also appoints the Board of Taxes and Assessments, which in turn appoints Deputy Tax Commissioners, who fix the valuation of real estate in their several districts for purposes of taxation.—(Sec. 14 of the Consolidation Act of 1882.)

Even if Mr. George should not appoint directly to these offices, it is well known that with his patronage he could probably influence their appointment, so as to obtain the positions for persons in sympathy with him, and every one knows how easily these officials could change the present valuation of real estate.

Then the chief practical defense of house-owners in this city comes through the summary proceedings, which are executed by the Marshals of the District Courts. These officers are appointed by the Mayor, and, like other city officials, removed only by him. If he should nominate some of his present supporters, fresh from reading his "Social Problems," where, on page 155, he states that certain landlords "are of no more use than so many great ravenous, destructive beasts, packs of wolves, herds of wild elephants, or such dragons as St. George is reported to have killed," and a complaint should be brought before him against a marshal for neglect of duty in a dispossess proceeding,—what attention would it be likely to receive? Behind the marshal, for protection of all property stand the police; what sort of men will Mr. George's Police Commissioners be apt to appoint?

We see, therefore, that a Mayor of New York, with Mr. George's views, might do much to carry them into effect. Probably in no position in the world, under our present laws, could more be done in this direction. It is indeed rare that an enthusiast of that type has a chance to attempt to realize such dreams, and Mr. George will be a good deal less sincere than his book shows him to be, if he does not use this wonderful opportunity to the utmost.

I submit, therefore, that all good citizens should oppose his candidacy.

But particularly, as Democrats, what ought we to do?

The fundamental principle of the Democracy has always been that of admiration and steadfast adherence to the Con-

stitution and laws authorized by that Constitution. What have they to say on this subject?

The United States Constitution declares in the Fifth Amendment: "Nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation."

We have seen the important part which landowners played in the formation of the Constitution of this State.

Section 6 of the New York State Constitution is to the same effect, and Sec. 13 of this Constitution says: "All lands within this State are declared to be allodial, so that, subject only to the liability to escheat, the entire and absolute property is vested in the owners, according to the nature of their respective estates."

Section 8, of II. Revised Statutes, p. 719, declares: "Every citizen of the United States is capable of holding lands within this State, and of taking the same by descent, devise or purchase."

This indeed is no new doctrine; it was imbedded in Magna Charta, which declared that no freeman shall be disseised or divested of his freehold, or of his liberties or free customs, but by the judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. Blackstone, in his "Commentaries," Vol. I., p. 129, declares that the three absolute rights of individuals are: "The right of personal security, the right of personal liberty, and the right of private property;" and Chancellor Kent, in Vol. II., p. 1, of his "Commentaries," uses the same language. Elliott's "Constitutional Debates," on the adoption of the United States Constitution in the different States are full of allusions to the protection of property in land, which this Constitution would afford.

That our Constitution and laws recognize no principle as more fundamental and sacred than that of private property in land is therefore undeniable.

But Mr. George would perhaps say that he does not demand that the title to land should be taken, but only the rent, and therefore that he does not take property.

He might claim that property meant the thing which is the object of ownership and not the aggregate of rights which an owner has over the thing, so that property was not taken when an owner was deprived of one of these essential rights, such as that of rent, but only when the thing itself was removed or interfered with. But the recent long line of cases in the suits against the Elevated Railroads have settled in this State that property means the aggregate of rights and not the thing owned. Probably the most recent decision is that of the Court of Appeals in the matter of Jacobs (98 N. Y., 105).

"The constitutional guaranty that no person shall be deprived of his property without due process of law may be violated without the physical taking of property for public or private use. Property may be destroyed, or its value may be annihilated . . . any law which destroys it or its value, or takes away any of its essential attributes, deprives the owner of his property."

However, Mr. George would hardly dare to make this contention, in view of his oft repeated use of the term property, in its correct sense, as defined by the courts; thus, on page 343, of "Protection and Free Trade," he says: "The only way to abolish private property is by the way of taxation. That way is clear and straightforward."

Since then this direct conflict exists between Mr. George's opinions and the "aims" of his platform on the one hand, and the Constitution and the laws on the other, and since it is also by no means clear which of these "aims" are at once to be put into practice, and since the peculiar boast of the Democracy has always been its conservative strict adherence to the Constitution, I do not see how any Democrat can support Mr. George.

However, I do not see how Mr. George can accept this office, if elected. How can he swear to support the Constitution and laws of this State as they now exist, while he

maintains the views expressed in his works?—No matter how he may hedge in his letter of acceptance, I do not believe that he can, if he would, free his mind from the passions which these years of controversy have engendered, and see to the administration of these laws, so abhorrent to him, according to their letter and their spirit. If he were running for the Constitutional Convention, this objection would not exist; but to attempt to fill the position of Mayor, without abolishing our present system, but according to the true meaning of the laws now in force, ought to be thoroughly abhorrent to him, if he means half of what he has said. — I can not imagine his taking that oath, without mental reservations, which would make it practically perjury;—and I believe that those who approve of his making such an attempt and aid him in it, by their votes, are not much better than accomplices before the act.

Finally, I wish to state that these remarks have been made with no feeling of hostility to the workingmen. In my humble way I have for years, by various publications, done what I could to induce them to go into politics; I believe it is a necessary movement, and in time will be a salutary one. But I object to this great movement, the most important one which will probably occur in our generation, instead of being utilized in a practical manner for the benefit of all, being turned aside to attack one class of our fellow-citizens. Henry George says, in his "Progress and Poverty," (p. 282): "Nor in the struggle of endurance must it be forgotten who are the real parties pitted against each other. . . . It is laborers on the one side and the owners of land on the other." This will not be the first of these conflicts. The history of the Dark Ages—of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries—is red with the blood spilt in the cities of Europe in the fights between the trade unions and the real-estate owners; every man who reads that history must feel it his duty to do all in his power to prevent the kindling of such a conflict here.

While we can all hope that the contingency of such fearful contests is still remote, we must recognize that even this peaceful strife at the polls of these two great classes prevents their uniting their forces and righting the many wrongs which they jointly suffer. I do not say that this contest has been engineered by the railroad kings, politicians and monopolists, who thrive in the present disorganized state of society, but I do say that nothing could have happened more opportunely for them, and that if they can only fan the flame, they have gained a new lease of life. Moreover, with our system of government the danger of diffusion of these ideas among persons who have not opportunity or ability to thoroughly examine them and see their fallacy, presents a great danger, which all good citizens should oppose. Mr. George's arguments apply to personal property as well as to real; a movement started against the latter cannot be stopped there; in all his books there is no formula that will lay the evil spirits, if they once break loose. The arguments of his master, Proudhon, he cannot refute. He is a preacher of Communism, although he wants to stop half way. It is the interest of all owners of property, real or personal, to oppose to the utmost the spread of the influence of this demi-communist.

A BUSINESS MAN'S ANSWER.

FINALLY, let us examine Mr. George's theories from the standpoint of a New York business man.

His main proposition is that there exists an "unearned increment," which the State should take from land-owners. Thus he says on page 295 of his *Social Problems* :

"As society grows, so grows this value, which springs from and represents in tangible form what society as a whole contributes to production as distinguished from what is contributed by individual exertion. . . . Here is a fund belonging to society as a whole, from which, without the degradation of alms, private or public, provision can be made for the weak, the helpless, the aged ; from which provision can be made for the common wants of all, as a matter of common right to each, etc."

But Mr. George nowhere proposes that society shall return the "unearned detriment."

If the State of New York should undertake to return all the money invested in lands in this State, with interest, and take the land in return, I doubt if it would make a good bargain. There is good farming land in Westchester County which does not now sell for as much as it cost to put up its stone fences.

If investors and builders do not come to a neighbor-

hood, can the unfortunate speculator call upon the city to take his land at what he paid for it, with fair interest? If not, why should he be obliged to surrender the profit which he has acquired by his superior foresight?

Mr. George's friends evidently suppose that investors and builders do no work, in selecting sites, etc., but trust to luck. I recently asked a successful builder why he had purchased a certain site for some houses on the outskirts of Brooklyn. He said that he had counted that there were so many families living in houses beyond these lots, and that they had to pass them in order to go to the nearest stores; he counted the number of passers-by, considered their probable wealth, the chances of the neighborhood remaining a respectable one, etc., and finally decided that by purchasing those lots at such a price and erecting stores on them, the tenants of those stores could make certain profits, which would enable them to pay him a certain rent.

His calculations proved to be successful; the stores met a need of that neighborhood, and he secured a fair profit. Should now the City or the State come in and demand that profit from him, and distribute it among all the inhabitants, who had given no thought to the matter? If the State should do so, would this man be encouraged to select another site, and undergo the worry and excitement of erecting other buildings, which would so exactly meet a public demand?

If this principle is to be applied to profits made from investments in lands, why not to other investments? For example, a milliner foresees that taste is taking a certain direction, and that certain ornamentation will become fashionable, and manufactures and lays in a store of it; shall her entire profit be taken, when people come and wish to have that particular ornament, or shall only a certain per cent. be taken, and if so, what per cent.?

Or, if a man foresees that a certain place will have a rapid increase in population, and opens a store and transports a large stock of goods, and proceeds to meet the urgent demand, are his profits to be taken? Are they not due to the increase of the population, just as much as the increase in the land values of that place?

On page 82 of his "Social Problems," Mr. George makes the arguments against allowing profits to land-owners apply to owners of patent-rights and other personal property, although copyrights are not mentioned.

This is only another evidence that these theories are applicable to personal property, if they apply to real estate, and would put a stop to all speculative investments, which, in effect, only tend to preserve the fruits of the earth for a time when the people will have more need of them than at present.

But Mr. George makes no practical suggestion as to how this "unearned increment" is to be calculated. In what does the "earned increment" consist? Land in a desert, without inhabitants, has not much value; who settles a new country, except under the belief that it will be populated? Mr. George says, in the passage above cited, that society contributes its share in a "tangible form," but he does not say with which of our senses this is to be recognized. What a chance for corruption and favoritism would be opened by the attempt to carry out such a scheme!

But Mr. George does not condescend to give us any details as to how this shall be done; his only practical proposition is that all land shall be taxed up to its rental value, so that the owners shall surrender it to the State and the State is then to proceed to act the part of landlord. Let us suppose that all this has been done and the land in the city has been acquired by the municipality or State, which then proceeds to offer to lease it to individ-

uals. Of course, in a city long leases would have to be given, especially if repairs or improvements are to be made by the tenants; large private corporations have found it advisable to give leases for twenty-one years with covenants for two or three renewals. What prices would the city be apt to realize? An intending bidder would, of course, wish to know how secure the title would be for which he was expected to give value; he would want to feel sure that the fee or term of years which he acquired would remain in him undisturbed. He would naturally inquire as to what had been the previous history of such purchasers of the fee or of leasehold interests from the city or from the State, and what would he find?

If he traced back the title to any piece of ground, he would come to a ground-brief from the Dutch authorities, or a grant from the British Crown; and back of that there was a purchase from the Indian inhabitants of this island. The Crown, which represented the State—the public of that day—received a valuable consideration for the conveyance; that money went into the public treasury, and an instrument was executed by the highest authority in the land, representing the people, conveying and assuring to the grantee the absolute title to the land to himself, and his heirs and assigns forever, with a covenant of warranty, by which the State agreed to defend the title to the lands so purchased at any time in future, when called upon to do so.

When the Revolution broke out, our State, in the Constitution of 1777, expressly pledged itself, by Article XXXVI., that “nothing in this Constitution contained shall be construed to affect any grant made by said king, or his predecessors,” and that clause is in our Constitution to-day. It was, relying on this pledge, that the real-estate owners of this State risked their lives and their

fortunes in favor of the Revolution, and enabled the State of New York to make so noble a record.

As to the upper part of the city, where the vacant lots lie, which Mr. George's friends so particularly abhor, the title to most of it was in the city up to a comparatively recent date; that formed part of the common lands of New York and Harlem. It was first leased for long terms to individuals for rents payable in a certain number of bushels of wheat, etc.—the book of leases can be seen in the Comptroller's office—and then later these rents were released on the payment of a lump sum to the city. Other parts of these commons were advertised and sold at public auction, some of it quite recently, and the money used to pay the city debts, build the aqueduct and wharves and lay out the Central Park. For these lands, the city executed full covenant and warranty deeds, conveying and assuring to the purchasers and to their successors forever, the absolute ownership to these lands. How can the people now demand that the acts of these public officers, elected by them, shall be nullified, and this land reclaimed, or any unfair burden placed upon it, violating thereby these solemn instruments?

The aqueduct, the Central Park, etc., were built with the money of these people; the city, the public, has received full value; it cannot recall these conveyances in the face of our constitutional prohibitions against violating the obligation of contracts or depriving individuals of their private property without compensation.

The policy which dictated these absolute conveyances was also wise. No one who knows what savage men and nature the early settlers had to contend with will doubt that this was necessary. Do we not know what hard work it took to make this island what it is? It was once a howling wilderness, where people lived only at the

risk of their lives; all along the Bowery the farms were given up at one time for fear of the Indians, and later with difficulty could men be induced to live on them; you can read that in the records at the City Hall. Time and again were these houses plundered by the Indians.

But now, when that is all changed and forgotten, these men, whose ancestors remained comfortably in Europe, come here and demand it all, in the name of morality, justice, and heaven knows what, and say that land is as free as air, and sneer at these Dutch Indian-fighters.

Moreover, the natural difficulties which had to be overcome to make this island what it is, were great.

Let anyone look at the large map of this city, known as General Viele's map, which shows the natural aspect of this island, with its rocks, creeks, swamps and bays, and then let him estimate what it cost to make it the firm, level land that it is now. Who paid for these improvements? On the lots themselves their owners paid for the excavations, etc. And was it not, also, almost exclusively the owners of the lots fronting on the streets who paid the heavy assessments out of their own pockets for building even our streets, which we all use? and as to the share which was raised by taxation, do we not all know how little of that comes from personal property, but almost all from the land-owners, so that they have already practically paid for almost the whole of the city's public works.

Mr. George pretends to think that these even streets and level lots represent the natural condition of this island. He says, on page 81 of his "Social Problems," speaking of the settlement of this city: "If the Astors had all remained in Germany, or, if there had never been any Astors, the land of Manhattan Island would have been here all the same." True, the land would have been here; but, without the men who invested the fortunes

which they brought with them, or made in business, in improving this land, Mr. George would have found this island as undesirable as any part of this rocky State which is still in a state of nature, and where land is to be had almost for the asking.

In fact, the right to no species of personal property has more guarantees under our Constitution and laws, or is entitled, on its own merits, to more consideration, than the right of property in land.

Considering all the facts, who would risk his money to purchase new titles, or take long leases, from such an Indian-giver as this State or City of New York? Who could tell how soon another demagogue would arise, and demand that the land should be sold over again? George repeats, most emphatically, Rousseau's arguments (which justified the anarchy of the French Revolution), that one generation cannot bind another.

In his "Irish Land Question," Mr. George says, on page 26: "It therefore follows, from the very fact of their existence, that the right of each one of the people of Ireland to an equal share in the land of Ireland, is equal and inalienable. . . . This right is irrefutable and infeasible. . . . No law, no covenant, no agreement can bar it. One generation cannot stipulate away the rights of another generation. . . . If the whole people of Ireland were to unite in bargaining away their rights to the land, how could they justly bargain away the right of the child who the next moment is born?"

But, how is a generation to be reckoned? Need a child wait until it comes of age, if opportunity sooner offers? How about children who are under age at the time of this partition, and receive no share, or perhaps not what they consider an adequate share—can they demand a resale, or reletting, when they come of age?

In fact, Mr. George's scheme is nothing but repudiation

of the State and City's most solemn obligations. It would give a shock to public and to private credit, if anyone supposed for a moment that there was any possibility of realizing such a scheme, compared to which any tampering with the currency would be child's play.

Nothing is heard, when Mr. George goes into practical politics, about any plan for compensation for "earned increment," but their only plan is to tax the owners of land, without reference to the improvements thereon. This shows how much Mr. George and his friends know of practical matters. This is only possible by taking the amount of money to be raised, and dividing it by the number of lots, and raising the quotient from each lot. For a lot can be valued for any purpose, in a city, only with reference to the improvements which are, or might be upon it; thus, assessors estimate the value of a vacant lot by considering what sort of a building could profitably be erected on it; then they estimate the rent of that building; then they deduct from the rent the interest on the capital required for the building, and other usual expenses of owners, and then they estimate upon how large a capital the remainder of the rent represents the interest, and that sum is taken as the value of the lot. A city lot has no value, except with reference to its actual or possible improvements, unless it be to pasture goats. If a building is already on the lot, and the assessors are told by Mr. George's party to value it without reference to the building, they can do so only by considering the value of some imaginary building on the lot; that constitutes the selling value of a lot.

The only approach to a practical plan of the "Progressive Democracy" is, therefore, simply silly and impossible, and the only practical effect would be to tax Vanderbilt's palace no more than a row of houses on Varick street, or a cabbage-garden in the Twenty-fourth Ward.

But, supposing that this scheme could, in some way, be carried out, so as to compel all owners to build on their vacant lands at once, what would be the result? What land is there now which is not built upon? It is land which is so situated that the owners believe that in future there will be greater need for it by the public for other purposes than those for which the people would now use it, and that the expense of preparing it for this temporary use would exceed the returns. If an owner thinks that his lot will soon be in demand, as a factory or warehouse, he will not put up a tenement house on it, because, although he might raise the necessary money by a mortgage, yet, that debt would prevent him subsequently raising the amount necessary to tear down the tenement house and build the factory, when the latter became more important for the wants of the people. The judgment of real-estate owners on these points can generally be trusted; they have every interest in getting an income from their land; if it lies in a good situation, and is not built upon, the owner will be continually called upon by agents, suggesting various purposes to which it could be put. To suppose that our public salaried officials would exhibit an equal zeal or judgment in these matters, is absurd.

If Mr. George and his friends are so improvident as not to see that the only practical measures which they propose will inevitably fail to carry out their schemes for the present, need we wonder that they are unable to look far enough into the past and future, and, consequently, fail to appreciate the disastrous consequences which their theories would have, if put into practice, upon the future material and moral welfare of our country, by destroying all the humanizing influences which cluster around the ownership of a home, by terminating the inducements which are necessary, even now, to lead

men to make the great sacrifices necessary to make habitable a new country in the Great West, or to extend our Eastern cities, and finally, by teaching men to violate, for the sake of present material comfort, the most solemn obligations, and to disregard the commandments, "Thou shalt not covet," and "Thou shalt not steal?"

A WORKINGMAN'S ANSWER.

ON Saturday I received a note from the gentleman who at our meeting on last Monday most zealously sustained Mr. George's theories, in which he stated that I had at that time not represented the workingmen's side of the question, and that consequently my argument was undemocratic. I considered that I had answered Mr. George when I had shown that his proposal was unjust.

However, without admitting that the Democratic party is exclusively the party of the workingmen, I intend this evening to consider Mr. George's candidacy from the stand-point of a workingman, and to ascertain for what reasons they ought to support him.—I will assume that the justice of his propositions is proven, and that the only question is one of expediency, namely, what the workingmen would gain if his theories as announced in his platform were put into practice.

The best expression of the present wishes of the workingmen that I know of, is to be found in the constitutions of the various trades unions. One of the most prominent unions is Typographical Union No. 6; § 3 of its Constitution reads : " The objects of this union shall be the maintenance of a fair rate of wages, the encouragement of good workingmen, and the employment of every means which may tend to the elevation of printers in social life." The Constitution of the Cigar Makers Union begins : " Whereas it is the duty of every worker to unite with his fellow worker to secure a fair compensation for his labor ; to elevate the condition of

the lowest paid worker to the standard of the highest ; to provide for the sick members and bury the dead."

The Furniture Workers Union has the following objects :

a) The maintenance and increase of wages. b) The reduction of the hours of labor. c) The assistance during strikes and lockouts. d) The assistance while unemployed. e) The assistance during sickness. f) The assistance in case of death. g) The assistance in case of loss of tools. h) The rendering of legal assistance in claims against employers. i) The instruction by lectures.

The Cigar Makers International Union of America is formed to improve themselves : " By prevailing upon the Legislature to secure first the prohibition of child labor under 14 years of age ; the establishment of a normal day's labor to consist of not more than 8 hours per day for all classes ; the abolition of the truck system, tenement house cigar manufacture, and the system of letting out by contract the convict labor in prisons and reformatory institutions ; the legalization of trade unions and the establishment of bureaus of labor statistics."

To these objects in the main, no fair-minded citizen can object ; let us see what Mr. George will do towards their realization.

The practical change proposed in his platform is to tax real estate without reference to the improvements, so that no one could afford to hold unimproved land but would be compelled to build immediately. Without stopping now to consider the practicability of this scheme, let us assume that it has been done, and that a large number of houses suited for dwellings and manufactures and offices have been built, so as to reduce rents throughout the city very materially, or even to a mere nominal sum. What advantage would that be to the workingmen ?

I am an employee of a large corporation ; if the rent of its various offices were reduced or entirely abolished, my pay would in no way be increased,—very possibly I might never hear of it ; I believe the men employed in any business in this city would say the same thing.

But if the rent of my apartment were reduced very materially, it would benefit me, if it was done in my case alone ; but if it were done throughout the city, very soon my employers would say : “ We hear you no longer pay rent ; that is probably so much of your salary ; we intend to reduce your salary that much, and if you are not satisfied, we can now get a man of equal ability for that pay, as other men in your branch have also to pay no rents.” Even if all employers did not do this at once, some would certainly begin it, and then the others would be forced to follow suit, or be undersold or driven out of the business. I believe the men employed in any trade or manufacture in this city would say that this would surely happen. Moreover, where would the money come from with which these houses are to be built ? Would it not be taken out of the trades and manufactures, where it is now invested, because it receives a larger return, and would not all these other trades and manufactures, and the men employed therein suffer ?

Or if the large amount of money which it is expected will be immediately raised by taxation were wisely expended for beneficent public purposes, and heat and light were furnished without charge to all citizens, would not employees soon hear similar remarks about the saving which they were now making in the matter of light and fuel, and would not one employer after the other make a consequent reduction in wages, as stated above in the case if rents were reduced ?

Would the workingmen not be in exactly the position in which they are to-day ? Would not this money expected for these public benefits also attract workingmen from

other cities, and so leave this same old contest between labor and capital? Would there not be the same necessity for the Declaration of the Principles of the Knights of Labor of North America, beginning: "The alarming development and aggression of aggregated wealth, which, unless checked, will inevitably lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses, render it imperative, if we desire to enjoy the blessings of life, that a check should be placed upon its power and upon unjust accumulation, and a system adopted which will secure to the laborer the fruits of his toil"?

Would not the fight against over-work, child-labor, the truck-system, and all the acknowledged evils of the *laissez-faire* system have to be begun again, just where they are now?

I submit therefore that this movement, as defined in their platform, can not accomplish the ends which workingmen desire and which would really benefit them; the amount of their pay would continue to be regulated by the most unscrupulous and hard-hearted man among the class of their employers.

But I believe that this movement will do more than this; I believe that it will very seriously injure the real interests of the workingmen and indefinitely postpone the realization of all practical plans for the improvement of their condition. In the first place, they are wasting their energies in electing an administrative officer, instead of trying to secure representatives in the legislature, who would secure the changes on our statute book, necessitated by our transition from a purely agricultural state to one having large manufacturing interests. No one knows what ought to be proposed in this matter so well as the workingmen themselves and unless they send representatives, their just demands will not be attended to. The same thing applies to our local legislature, the Board of Aldermen; the workingmen

have announced their intention of not paying attention to these offices, but of concentrating their efforts on the Mayor. It is already evident that both Aldermen and Assemblymen are to be of the same class as in former years; that they will be the tools of politicians and corporations, as in former years; and that the workingmen will get as much benefit, as they have got in former years. But this is not all the mischief: the demands which the workingmen make for shorter hours, etc., can be conceded to them only at a certain loss and sacrifice on the part of other classes of the community. Hitherto their demands have met generally with fair popular support; for instance the early closing movement. But let the workingmen adhere to Mr. George's theories and they will antagonize a very large class of the people of this State, and drive them to unite with the employers, so that the demands of the workingmen will meet with a very different reception, after a few campaigns such as this promises to be.

That Mr. George's theories are not actually going to be put into practice, every practical man knows; "the statesmanship of the plough," which, as Governor Seymour said, guides this country, forbids it; the whole movement is too much against the American traditions; the Churches will all be against it; the influence which a combination of employers and real estate owners would bring to bear, if once aroused, with all their friends, would simply overwhelm the trades-unions. Moreover, Mr. George's theories, as soon as they are brought to light and their practical application considered, will cause so many new theorists to spring up with equally visionary plans, who will oppose each other, so that all will cease to have attractions for any large number of citizens sufficiently strong to hold them together.

I do not therefore think that, admitting that the argument which I first advanced this evening were false, and that the workingmen could realize benefits from this plan,

that there is the remotest prospect of its being put into operation. But I do think that it will immediately excite hostility among a very large and important class and that the real reforms needed by workingmen will thereby be delayed.

The experience of Europe during the last century shows the certain futility of this movement. The first man to undertake to put these theories into practice was Babeuf, at the close of the first French Revolution; Proudhon was the first to undertake to justify it, and Considerant (in 1837), a pupil of Fourier, modified the doctrine so that it should only apply to land, and not to personal property.

How closely Mr. George has followed these authors a few citations, showing the main points of their theories, will demonstrate.

To begin with the title page of Mr. George's first book, which reads: "Progress and Poverty: an Inquiry into the cause of industrial depressions, *and of increase of want with increase of wealth*"; the article cited in note A, of Mr. Considerant's Socialism (published in 1849) is entitled: "Of the causes of the increase of misery in proportion to the development of riches."—This article states the proposition as follows: "If there is a social phenomenon worthy of attention, it is certainly that of the increase of misery among the laboring classes in proportion to the progress of general wealth, and that other phenomenon not less extraordinary and always accompanying the latter, of this misery existing most intensely among the most industrious and free nations, like England, France etc."

Mr. George says in his Progress and Poverty, p. 7: "It is at last becoming evident that the enormous increase in productive power has no tendency to extirpate poverty. It is in the older and richer sections of the Union that pauperism and distress among the working classes are becoming most painfully apparent." (p. 9.)

Mr. Considerant impressively says : "The Sphinx is the people ; the terrible enigma is the problem of the times." Mr. George says on page 9 : "It is the riddle which the Sphinx of fate puts to our civilization, and which not to answer is to be destroyed."

In Considerant's other work, entitled "*Destinée Sociale*" (1837) he says on page 250 : "It is then proved by facts that the proletariat and pauperism increase in epochs of civilization with population and more rapidly than it, and as the direct cause of the growing progress of industry."—He repeats the same statement in various forms, as often as Mr. George does.—We see therefore that the problem which these two writers propose, is the same.

As to the remedy, they also agree and Mr. Considerant says, in his work of 1837 : "The whole land must be cultivated as the land of one man." In the work of Mr. Considerant entitled "*Socialism*" he says on page 107 ; "Rent of land is a feudal privilege which ought to go to rejoin its elder brethren in the great ditch of justice of the Nations, and Revolutions.... There are among Socialists those who would derange nothing in society ; who do not call us to live in common, to abandon that which we have, to change our manner of life for something we know not what... Suppose that these socialists should come to power and this should be then law."

Mr. George says on page 364 of *Progress and Poverty* : "It is not necessary to confiscate land ; it is only necessary to confiscate rent."

Mr. Considerant does not enter to any extent into an attempt to show the justice of this appropriation of land by the public ; so Mr. George has to take up Proudhon, for this part of the argument, and repeats in various forms the latter's three arguments.

Firstly Mr. Proudhon says in his book on *Property* (I cite from the translation published by Tucker, Princeton, Mass.,

1876): "How can the supplies of nature, the wealth created by Providence, become private property? We want to know by what right man has appropriated wealth which he did not create, and which nature gave to him gratuitously? Who made the land? God. Then proprietor, retire." (p. 89). Mr. George says in *Social Problems* (p. 278): "What more preposterous than the treatment of land as individual property It is the creation of God."

Proudhon's second point is that universal consent gives no justification to property, he says (p. 311 in *Theorie de l'Import*): "The earth furnishes to man the material, tools and force.—Labor puts force in motion.—Labor alone is productive. Now to recognize the right of territorial property is to give up labor, since it is to relinquish the means of labor." Mr. George says in the chapter on "Injustice of Private Property in Land," in *Progress and Poverty*: "land on which and from which all must live. The recognition of private individual proprietorship of land is the denial of the natural rights of other individuals. For as labor can not produce without the use of land, the denial of the equal right to the use of land is necessarily the denial of the right of labor to its produce."

Proudhon's third argument is that "proscription (or long possession) gives no title to property; it is not based on a just title; past error is not binding on the future," p. 89.

Mr. George says on 307 of *Progress and Poverty*; "Consider for a moment the utter absurdity of the titles, by which we permit it to be passed from John Doe to Richard Roe Everywhere not to a right which obliges, but to a force which compels, and when a title rests but on force, no complaint can be made when force annuls it."

Proudhon's conclusion is: "The earth cannot be appropriated," (p. 73 of French edition). — Mr. George says: "There is on earth no power which can rightfully make a grant of exclusive ownership of land," (p. 304 of *Progress and Poverty*).

Proudhon then abuses owners, for example, citing a verse which shows how first comes the contractors share, then the laborers, then the capitalists and then: "I am the proprietor. I take the whole," (p. 189).—Mr. George says in *Protection and Free Trade*: "And the robber that takes all that is left is private property in land," (p. 285).—The number of these comparisons might be increased very largely. Finally, in his picture of the results, Mr. George returns to *Considerant*, and insists with him upon the great advantages to individuals arising from this cooperation and common ownership of all living in the commune, and as the picture of a Utopia one is as beautiful as the other. We see therefore that as to his title, problem, its solution, the remedy of the evil and the result Mr. George has followed *Considerant*, and as to the justification of the remedy Proudhon.—Unfortunately Proudhon proves too much; for as I showed in my former paper, if Mr. George has demonstrated that there should be no private property in land, he has also demonstrated this as to personal property.—Proudhon proclaimed this, and it was the chief difference between him and *Considerant*.

If we delay for a moment to call in mind the resemblances which I have pointed out to Proudhon and *Considerant*,—and they can be greatly increased if any one will take the trouble so to do, by comparing these books in the Astor Library,—can we accept the generally received theory as to George's intellectual capacity or of his extraordinary devotion to humanity, or even of his phenomenal honesty? What must we think of those men who have compared his doctrines to those of Christ? Is it not an insult to our intelligence to dish up these warmed-up meats from which Europe has long ago turned away in disgust, as the heaven-born manna which alone can preserve the New World? If the ghosts of Messieurs Proudhon and *Considerant* were allowed to sit on the stage at one of Mr. George's meet-

ings, would not his remarks be often interrupted by their indignant chestnut-bells?

But to resume: What success had this theory in France? Babœuf's rude announcement of it was the closing episode of the first French Revolution and made Napoleon I. possible; the fear of it sustained the Restoration and the July Monarchy; Proudhon and Considerant were in the Assemblée of the 1848 Republic, and Considerant then published his socialism above cited, and announced that in three years the social-democratic republic would be in force; in far less time the second Empire was established, as necessary for the preservation of order.

Since then, these theories have in Europe passed from the stage of practical politics and are only referred to by historians as showing the steps by which modern socialism, as advocated by Karl Marx and Lasalle arose. It is the oblivion to which these older radical theorists have been consigned by the modern communists themselves, which induced the French bourgeoisie to support the present Republic. If therefore this seed of dragons' teeth could not sprout in France and has now rotted in the ground, we need not fear that it will bear fruit in this much more uncongenial clime. Nor need we fear that the people will accept a despotism in order to escape it; the true proportions of this movement will be known soon enough. But we must fear that this movement will excite hostility against the workingmen among a large class of our well-to-do population, especially in our cities, and also that it will induce this class to submit with excessive patience to the increasing growth of the power of the monopolists and politicians, for fear that any change in our old-fashioned countrified government might be for the worse.

But this revival of worn-out Old-World theories is also injurious to the workingmen, in turning them from the pursuit of the theories of Lasalle and Karl Marx, many of

which, all must recognize, have a certain amount of justice. Those writers recognize the necessity of a historical development and aim at improving the workingmen's condition by introducing factory regulations, shorter hours, etc., as our trades-unions' circulars above cited demanded. To turn back the hands of the clock for forty years and take up these impracticable chimeras, means an injury to the real welfare of the workingmen, and of our whole people, which it is difficult to under-estimate.

The dread which those theories excited in France, so as to drive men to accept the First and Second Empire, may also be a warning to us of the effect which even a moderate success of this movement at the polls, would have upon capital invested in this City and State. I fear that a vote of even 20,000 will be sufficient to give a check to our industries, which are just now reviving under the influence of general prosperity; failing trade and closing factories will be in proportion to the success of this movement, and the only real change in the condition of the working men.

There is another benefit which we derive from tracing Mr. George's ideas to their source: When we see how many of his theories he has evidently taken from Considerant, who advocated the co-operative communes with all land in common, we are able to understand many suggestions of Mr. George, as being part of a more or less definite intention of realizing some such scheme, and which ideas appear disconnected and unintelligible, if we consider solely his intentions of abolishing rent as his one object, with which he would be satisfied.

Thus, I was surprised to find Mr. George advocating the increase of the power of our Board of Aldermen. He says, in the interview published in the *Sun* of October 3: "New York (city) should have one legislative body that in local affairs would have sovereign power." There was no demand for this in the platform, nor so far as I know have the work-

ingmen demanded it ; the whole tendency of legislation has been to deprive this Board of power ; Mr. George does not suggest any manner of improving its character,—but only wants it to have “sovereign power.”—Without stopping to dwell on the fact that if Mr. George were a real Democrat he would not admit that any government was “sovereign” over the people, I think the explanation for this strange demand is that it is an essential part of Considerant's theory of the co-operative commune. This absolute local government is necessary for any scheme of communism; if all are to enjoy equally, all must work equally, and this requires strict supervision. It was the demand of the Paris communists; the beautiful Utopia that makes Mr. George's book so attractive cannot be realized without it. No matter how much he may strive to keep it in the back-ground, he cannot hide the cloven hoof. Thus he says on page 296 of *Social Questions*, that “society may pass into a co-operative association,” and on page 410 of *Progress and Poverty*: “Government would change its character, and would become the administration of a great co-operative society. It would become the agency by which the common property was administered for the common benefit.” This is only Considerant's communal government ; how much official machinery would be necessary in New York to realize Mr. George's plans, as set out for example, on page 410 of *Progress and Poverty*: “This revenue arising from the common property could be applied to common benefit, as were the revenues of Sparta. We might not establish public tables—they would become unnecessary ; but we could establish public baths, museums, libraries, gardens, lecture rooms, music and dancing halls, theatres, universities, technical schools, shooting galleries, play-grounds, gymnasiums, etc.” Society attempts some of these things now ; how does it realize them ? Had we not better get our present undertakings in good working order, before starting out on such unlimited extensions of the system ?

Moreover, this demand for one sovereign local government, over the million and a half of people of this city, and which is absolutely necessary for the realization of half of Mr. George's schemes, presents the chief objection to all that is hopeful in the modern labor movement. That movement recognizes the necessity of trades unions, that they have come to stay, that in their proper development and participation in public affairs lies great promise for the welfare not only of the workingmen, but of the State; and that these trade organizations should be entrusted with powers and duties and form part of our body politic, as the geographical divisions called States and Counties made up the Union when we were purely an agricultural community.

Now these trades unions have as much need for the democratic doctrine of wheels within wheels, and as little need for a sovereign local government over them, as the States have for a sovereign and therefore unlimited national government (see Mr. Bancroft's Plea for the Constitution,* and this radical difference between trades unionists and socialists has long been instinctively recognized in labor circles, and the conflict between the two has been for years going on with varying success; see the following citation on page 602 of the Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of New York: "To confound the trade union movement with the political movement of the Socialists is a thorough mistake, the difference being that while the trades unions are organized only for the purpose of protection for their labor, adapting themselves at all times to circumstances and conditions as well as to the surroundings, and being largely influenced thereby, the socialistic movement aims at the entire reconstruction of society upon their principles, is satisfied with nothing

* See also: "Tendencies of the Republican Party," published by this Club.

less, ignores all possible reasonable objections, and disparages trade organizations, recognizing them only as obstacles in their path of progress."

Now, it is plain that Mr. George with his demand for a sovereign, *i. e.* unlimited local government belongs to the communist-socialistic school, — as every faithful disciple of Proudhon and Considerant should ; and it is also for this reason that I believe that workingmen, who believe in trades unions, should oppose Mr. George.

Trades unions have no place in Mr. George's schemes ; according to the index, they are not mentioned in Progress and Poverty ; in Protection and Free Trade they are referred to three times,—two of which are bare mentions, and the third (on pages 322 and 323) is as follows : " Something can be done in this way for those within such organizations ; but it is after all very little.... This, those who are inclined to put faith in the power of trades-unionism are beginning to see, and the logic of events must more and more lead them to see."—Mr. George therefore has no faith in trades-unions.—Are the skilled workingmen then going to allow their organizations to be used for this man's election ? Have they not had enough experience with theorists, politicians and demagogues (often in the pay of employers) who did not believe in their unions ? Among his supporters are found men whose interests are identified with bodies which have always opposed trades unions. *A vote for Henry George is a vote against the Trades Unions.*

On the other hand, if the workingmen, as members of their trades-unions, would make a demand on the Democratic Party for recognition of their representatives in the party's councils, they would before long, I am convinced, receive due attention, and be able to have an influence on legislation and choice of officers proportionate to the importance of their organizations. The demands of these unions for recognition by the State, and for a certain

amount of autonomy in their internal affairs, is justified by all the Democratic Fathers in their advocacy of State Rights.

Or else the workingmen could in local matters go into politics by themselves and seek to gain the practical objects which their constitutions have so long demanded; for this they should elect members of the Legislature, instead of having their Central Committee, as it has to-day done, prohibit the organizations to indorse or put forward candidates. There is where the source of evil lies; in the reckless bad laws which the Legislatures pass. But if the workingmen say they cannot elect Assemblymen, because they are divided into so many districts that their strength is wasted, then they should strive to abolish this unnatural division into geographical election districts. But it is worse than useless for workingmen to try to put these wild theorists who can only alarm men of property into administrative offices.*

It is the old story of that which happened in Rome, where the wild pleas for the division of land by the Gracchi drove the Romans to accept a plutocracy and finally the Cæsars. As above mentioned, it was the similar demand for common land, which led to the overthrow of the first and second French Republics. Can we not profit by their experience?

Can we not do these things better in America?

This, I think, will be the turning point in American history. No republic has ever yet passed from the condition of an agricultural community to that of a state with large cities, without being plagued by demagogues—especially

* Under the Consolidation Act of 1882 the men who assess land for taxation, are sworn to value improved and unimproved land equally at its selling value. What selling value has city property if the actual or possible improvements are not considered?

those who demanded a division of land—until refuge was taken in a depotism.

If we can introduce those trade organizations in a peaceable and orderly manner into our body politic—a feat which no state has yet accomplished—and satisfy their just demands, I believe that we would have a state, which might realize some of Considerant's beautiful aspirations, here in America, although his French methods are impracticable. America must find its own way. Let us remember what Emerson said:

"We live in a new and exceptional age. America is another name for Opportunity. Our whole history appears like a last effort of the Divine Providence in behalf of the human race."

Progress and Justice; or, The Work for Federalism.

Bismarck is reported to have said: "There was some justification for Parisian communism." May it not then be worth while for us to inquire whether there is not some grievance, which caused over sixty thousand of our fellow citizens at the last election to vote for the representative of such wild theories as those of Henry George, evidently merely as an indignant protest against the existing order of things, in this "land of the free and home of the brave?"

Anyone who looks back upon the last few years and sees how rapidly this discontent has spread and organized for political action, must realize that it is not a matter which this generation can afford to disregard. Especially is it incumbent upon anyone who may believe in the principles set forth in my "Trade Organizations in Politics," to consider whether in the light of recent occurrences its theories, favoring the development of trade, business and professional organizations must not be considered as dangerous, at this time and in our country.

I believe, however, that if we will patiently examine this workingmen's movement, we will find in it, among much that is reprehensible, many signs of promise, and that we will realize that the great question is how to encourage the latter and repress the former, and that by a courageous and charitable spirit the development of this movement may be so guided as to produce the greatest

benefits, not only to the workingmen, but to society at large.

In the first place, no one need assume that this movement is to grow indefinitely; the differences of interest which exist between the skilled and unskilled workingmen are already making themselves felt in the contests between the old trade unionists and the Knights of Labor. The latter require a strong centralized organization, governing all laborers engaged in occupations requiring little or no skill, so as to keep the great army of unskilled labor from migrating to any section where a strike may exist, and taking up the employment which the strikers have dropped; to render a strike of such laborers successful, the unemployed men of the whole country must be controlled. Skilled workingmen, on the other hand, need fear only the competition of men who have devoted years to prepare themselves for the trade; they therefore have but little dread of competition from the great mass of day laborers. The unskilled workingmen are consequently called upon to contribute for the success of strikes in all parts of the country, as they can only hope to improve their own condition by raising that of all other unskilled laborers. The carpenters or engineers, on the other hand, while they have a much more direct interest in the success of a strike in their own trade in any part of the country, have but little concern as to the condition of hod carriers or freight handlers.

The disputes in the United Labor Party are therefore unavoidable and certain to increase, so that there is no cause for excessive alarm. Moreover, as any communistic movement nears apparent success, it is actually approaching destruction; for the reason that then its leaders must unfold their plans, how their theories are to be practically realized, and there is none that will obtain the approval of workingmen. Common enjoyment of the earth's prod

ucts can exist only with their common production; this common production can be made fair only by the strictest government supervision, and this is exactly what communists object to. The International in Europe flourished there but recently; it was so successful that its members at last began discussing what they would do when Government was actually in their hands; that discussion broke up their organization and it is now no longer heard of.

The study of history shows also that attempts to introduce equality of property have all failed, and anyone who appreciates the stability of legal institutions, and their slow change even among distantly related races and in different climes, will feel sure that we are not at the utmost approaching anything except temporary disorders.

But this danger is one sufficiently serious to demand the most careful consideration of all who feel an interest in the country's welfare. Is it not possible to discover and remove the cause of this discontent, ere it breaks out in violence? That the condition of masses of our fellow beings in our great American cities is most wretched is undeniable. Their condition can not be ascertained by comparing their food or wages with that of European workmen. Our climate is so exhilarating and exhausting, the cold and heat are so extreme, that the comforts required to make life here endurable much exceed those needed in Europe. No one acquainted with New York City in summer will deny that for about three months the condition of operatives, who spend their days in crowded factories and their nights in tenement houses, is one which entails long and severe physical suffering, and which renders mental and moral improvement extremely difficult; in the raw cold of our winter days and nights, they are again exposed to severe strains upon

their constitutions, by which many sicken or have their lives shortened.

The progress of science has led to the discovery of many means by which articles may be manufactured more cheaply or with more attractive appearance, than heretofore; but at the expense of the health of the operatives, although the evil effects of their occupation are often not immediately apparent.

In short, no one can pretend that the condition of the working classes in our great cities is a satisfactory one. But the aggravation of this condition consists in its being, as a rule, permanent. Our city is full of rich men, who were workingmen in their youth, and yet if you ask them whether they could begin to-day as a workingman and repeat their success, they would tell you that it could not be done. No one has set forth the evils suffered by workingmen and the present hopelessness of their fate, more eloquently than Mr. George, and in my opinion his description is not overdrawn as to our large cities. His explanation is false and his remedy is vain, as I have tried, to show. Is there another explanation of this evil, and is there another remedy?

I know that Mr. Mill is supposed to have settled this question by the mysterious theories of "supply and demand," "competition," etc., and to have shown that the actual condition is the best possible and that legislation can produce no real improvement; but there are some considerations which this pessimistic school does not sufficiently consider.

In my opinion anyone who makes inquiries among workingmen and employers in our cities will find that Thornton in his work on "Labor," by which he forced Mr. Mill to confess the inadequacy of the famed wage-fund theory, is correct when he says (p. 101): "What really does, within certain impassable limits, regulate

wages, is commonly, when the employed are content to remain passive, the combination of the employers; and when these have (as they in practice do far more and far oftener than they get credit for) fixed upon a higher rate than they need have done, they can, of course, lower it if they please. . . . Now, among keenly competing employers, there are never wanting some who are willing to reduce wages so much as possible. . . . But scarcely more true is it of Ireland, or of India, than of England, that whatever has, at any time, been the minimum of subsistence—supposed to be sufficient to enable laborers to go on living as they had been accustomed to live—that ~~some~~ minimum has been the measure of the price of labor. Whenever and wherever masters have had the framing of the scale of wages, this has been the basis of their calculations (p. 147). . . . Instead of suffering the rate of wages to be settled naturally by competition, they endeavor by combination to settle it arbitrarily (p. 80). But it is only very rarely, and when labor is at once very scarce and in very great request, that masters are tempted to compete with each other. At all other times they are in the habit of combining, instead of competing, and it is their combination which then determines the price of labor, and determines it arbitrarily. . . . Combined masters really possess—whether they choose to exercise or not—almost absolute power of control over the wages of uncombined workmen. . . . Thus in a normal state of things, . . . the price of labor is determined not by supply and demand, which never determined the price of anything, nor yet generally by competition, which generally determines the price of everything else, but by combination among the masters” (pp. 83–85). Mr. Mill, in his reply to Mr. Thornton, in the ‘Fortnightly Review,’ in effect admitted the justice of

the latter's criticism, to the considerable dismay of his own scholars. He says, on page 690: "In this higgling, the laborer in an isolated condition, unable to hold out even against a single employer—much more against the tacit combination of employers—will, as a rule, find his wages kept down at the lower limit."

Anyone who will take the trouble to inquire in actual life, or to consult the Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 1886, will find that, in this State and in this time, what Adam Smith said is true: "Masters are always and everywhere in a sort of tacit but uniform combination not to raise wages above their actual rate."

Furthermore, it appears to be true what Cairnes said, in his "Leading Principles of Political Economy": "What we find in effect is not a whole population competing indiscriminately for all occupations, but a series of industrial layers, superposed on one another, within each of which the various candidates for employment possess a real and effective power of selection, while those occupying the several strata are for all purposes of effective competition practically isolated from one another" (p. 64).

Sir John Lubbock, in a recent article on the early closing movement in "Good Words," said: "Happily, I may say this is no question between shopkeepers and their assistants. There is no such difference. I believe the shopkeepers are almost as anxious to close as the assistants themselves. Perhaps, then, it may be said, why not leave the matter in their hands? Because in almost every case the arrangements for early closing have been rendered nugatory by the action of some very small minority among the shopkeepers. Over and over again the shopkeepers in a given district have been anxious to close, and have all agreed to do so with, perhaps, a single exception. But that single exception is fatal. One after another the

rest gradually open again, the whole thing breaks down, and thus a small minority tyrannize over the rest."

Bearing in mind these three propositions, namely, that the rate of wages in every trade is mainly determined by an open or secret combination of the employers, and that the most unscrupulous employer in any trade can force other employers to be equally oppressive to their employees, under penalty of being driven out of the business, and that workingmen in the trades requiring any training are not able to go at will from one trade to another—is it true that legislation ought and can do nothing towards permanently improving the condition of the workingmen? Firstly, as to the "ought," the answer of Mr. Mill and his followers is plain. Cairnes, in his work above cited, says: "I am unaware of any rule of justice applicable to the problem of distributing the produce of industry" (p. 263). Thornton says in his book "On Labor": "Either side is clearly at liberty to put forward whatever claim it pleases. The only question is whether it is strong enough to enforce its claim" (p. 301). Professor Sumner says in his "What Social Classes Owe One Another": "Society does not need any care or supervision (p. 119). . . . There is no injunction, no 'ought' in political economy at all" (p. 156).

To counterbalance these opinions of the Manchester school, I would refer to the writings of the modern German political economists, who constitute the so-called Professorial-Socialist school. Thus, Schmoller says in his "Ueber einige Grundfragen" (p. 150): "Law and humanity must not be banished even from political economy;" and on page 90: "A great part of this injustice arises because, in times of new economical development, morality and law are at first ineffectual against the actual power of the rich." These sentiments are re-echoed by all the energetic writers of this school, and it is their

theories which are being followed out in the present successful German legislation for the regeneration of the working classes. As Rae says of this school, in his "Contemporary Socialism" (p. 202): "They said it was vain for the Manchester party to deny that a social question existed, and to maintain that the working classes were as well off as it was practical for economical arrangements to make them. They declared there was much truth in the charges which socialists were bringing against the existing order of things, and that there was a decided call upon all the powers of society—and, among others, especially upon the State—to intervene with some remedial measures."

Even the writers of the Manchester school—while their official programme denies the propriety of any interference with individuals in economical matters—let fall many expressions entirely inconsistent with this claim. Thus, Mr. Mill says in the article in the "Fortnightly Review," for May, 1869, above cited: "Every opinion as to the relative rights of laborers and employers involves, expressly or tacitly, some theory of justice, and it cannot be indifferent to know what theory" (p. 506). The Report of the English Labor Law Commissioners, in 1867 (see "Davis' Labor Laws"), contains the following passage: "All that, as it appears to us, the law has to do, *over and above any protection that may be required for classes unable to protect themselves*, such as women and children, is to secure a fair field for the unrestricted exercise of industrial competition." Finally, even Professor Sumner, in the same book from which the heartless principles above cited were taken, says: "The safety of workmen from machinery, the ventilation and sanitary arrangements required by factories, the special precautions of certain processes, the hours of labor of women and children, the limits of age for employed children,

Sunday work, hours of labor—these, and other like matters, ought to be controlled by the men (workingmen) themselves, through their organizations.”

Surely, this programme of practical reforms ought to be sufficient for the present to satisfy even ardent reformers; but is it not plainly inconsistent with the *laissez-faire* doctrines, above cited, of the same eminent professor, as well as with the teachings concerning personal liberty of the founders of this school? The late Mr. Jevons, in his work entitled “The State in Relation to Labor,” confesses that this main doctrine of the Manchester school is a failure; he says: “Evidently there must be cases where it is incumbent on one citizen to guard against the danger to other citizens. But even in the extreme case of the adult man, experience unquestionably shows that men from mere thoughtlessness or ignorance incur grave injuries to health or limb which very little pressure from the Legislature could avert with benefit to all parties” (p. 5). “It is no doubt a gross interference with that metaphysical entity, the liberty of the subject, to prevent a man from working with phosphorus as he pleases; but if it can be shown by unquestionable statistics and the unimpeachable evidence of scientific men that such working with phosphorus leads to a dreadful disease, easily preventable by a small change of procedure, then I hold that the Legislature is *prima facie* justified in obliging the man to make this small change. The liberty of the subject is only the means towards an end” (p. 12.) And this eminent writer finally confesses: “The question may well arise indeed, whether, according to the doctrine here upheld, there is really any place at all for rules and general propositions” (p. 17).

This confession of failure appears to be the final conclusion to which the Manchester school has come; and yet there must be some general principles by which all

these particular cases are to be governed; there must remain a science of legislation on economic matters.

The fault which, as it seems to me, has led to the decay of the Manchester school, is its indifference to the exercise of the principles of justice between classes or groups of men, or between the State and such classes or groups. Thus, Professor Sumner says, on p. 160 of his above cited work: "The relations of sympathy and sentiment are essentially limited to two persons only, and they cannot be made a basis for the relations of groups of persons, or for discussion by any third party." But if it is my duty as an individual not to trample on but to show compassion to another individual, who may be suffering, is it not also my duty to show compassion and not to trample upon a number of individuals or class? And is it not equally my duty when acting not individually, but with a number of others or in a class, to show the same spirit and not to trample upon another individual or class? All classes combined, or the State, owe sympathy to an individual, as evidenced by public charitable institutions, courts of justice, etc.; should not the same spirit be shown to a number of individuals, or to class? The State compels one individual to show sympathy to another; why may it not insist on a number of individuals or a class showing sympathy to an individual, or to a number of individuals or class? Why should it allow one class to destroy another physically, morally and spiritually, when it does not permit one individual so to destroy another? Is not the former, if anything, the greater wrong?

The position of the Manchester school differs in no way from that of the first man who said: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Christianity in making the love of neighbor, as illustrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan, its second great commandment, says that we are.

As I have tried to show in my paper on Federalism, the

root of law is in this God-given feeling of sympathy, and that the spirit which pervades it is love.

Sir Matthew Hale said: "Christianity is parcel of the law of England."

If, therefore, we admit that the law can enforce the exercise of sympathy between individuals, it must also, in my opinion, be able to enforce such sympathy between classes.

The great change which is now occurring in this country, as it is being filled up, is the formation of classes of men who do not, as formerly, go from one occupation to another, but who remain for life in the same pursuit of a living. In our political economy we must therefore begin with the injunction in the song of the herald-angels: "Peace on earth, good-will amongst men;" or, as St. Paul expands it in Epistle to the Colossians, Ch. III., v. 2: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all."

We should cast off the name of Christians if we believe that in our business life, which comprises, probably, the greater part of our energies, mutual consideration and justice are to have no place.

Or, on merely patriotic grounds, if we assume that a State is a being created to develop particularly certain faculties, or realize certain ideals, must we not be willing to limit our absolute liberty, in order to realize these ideals? How could society otherwise have been formed? In the words of Cobbett: "There never yet was, and never will be, a nation permanently great, consisting for greater part of wretched and miserable families."

Moreover, the effect upon ourselves of consenting to, or assisting in causing the debasement—physical, intellectual or moral—of our fellow-creatures, must react upon and lower our own moral qualities.

Anyone, therefore, will probably easily admit that if it be possible this justice should enter into our relations with our fellow-beings in business life. The very numerous laws contained in the statute books of this State, especially in the sanitary code, show that in fact we do recognize this principle in isolated cases. It is part of the police power of the State, which, as defined by our Court of Appeals (98 New York, 98), "is very broad and comprehensive, and is exercised to promote the health, comfort, safety and welfare of society."

As to the theoretical desirability of the admission of these higher principles of justice into business life, there can probably be little doubt; the only question is how that can be rendered possible in the present state of society?

In my opinion, our views of what is just already play a much larger part in business life than is generally acknowledged by writers on political economy. Are not the wages of the most unskilled laboring men fixed by the amount of physical comforts which their employers think it necessary to allow them, over and above the means necessary for the bare support of life? And from these wages required to realize the lowest ideals of life, do not wages grade upwards in various stages as the skill or strength required in the work increases? So that finally the rate of wages is determined by the ideas of justice in regard to compensation for the rudest forms of labor among the employers; and we have seen what an influence the most selfish of a class of employers have in reducing wages.

Sir John Lubbock says in the above cited article on the early closing movement: "It seems clear that nothing but legislation can remedy the evil. Voluntary action has been tried and failed over and over again, and the almost unanimous opinion of the witnesses examined

before the House of Commons committee was that it was hopeless to expect any shortening of the hours in that way. Such, then, is the present position of affairs, and, as I have said, the general feeling of the shopkeeping community is in favor of legislation. Even as long ago as 1873 the shopkeepers who came to me with reference to the bill I then proposed expressed themselves in favor of a general compulsory closing, I then thought this was impossible. Only by degrees have I become convinced how deep and general this feeling is."

The State can certainly regulate many evils if it will. It does regulate them to a certain extent; if the programme of Professor Sumner as to factory laws, hours of labor, etc., were carried out, we would probably be going as far as the circumstances at present require. The chief thing necessary at this time appears to me to be to recognize that these so-called interferences with the liberty of contract are justified in theory, and are not merely to be considered by the richer classes as victories wrung from them by ignorant masses acting against their own interests. All classes should take a lively interest in the adjustment of these questions, in the belief that their correct solution will afford a great and permanent good to all.

We should recognize once for all the general principle that no manufacture shall be carried on which, as a rule, produces sickness or prematurely shortens the lives of the individuals employed therein; that no dwellings or workshops shall exist which do not possess the sanitary conditions necessary to preserve the ordinary health of the inmates. The effect of carrying this principle into practice would be of course to stop every kind of business in which the employer could not or would not furnish the employees salubrious working-rooms and pay them sufficient to support themselves in a healthy and decent man-

ner, in return for only so many hours of labor as would not overtax their strength, but allow them a fair, physical, mental and moral development.

According to the Massachusetts statistics of Labor Report of 1880: "The advancement of the workingman in an economic way, along with the best intellectual and moral training, is the only sure method to improve his social education, opportunities and life" (p. 244).

As John Stuart Mill said: "Education is not compatible with extreme poverty. It is impossible effectually to teach an indigent population" (p. 202 of "Political Economy").

Before proceeding, however, to enumerate the blessings which we all will acknowledge might flow from such an improvement in the condition of workingmen, let us examine the great objections which of course suggest themselves to any one. The first is, that such an extension of the sanitary laws, tenement-house inspection, etc., means the stopping of many business establishments which can earn only sufficient profits to pay their employees their present low wages. The natural consequence would be that these employees would be thrown out of work, and that the supply of the articles which they manufactured would decrease and the price thereof increase.

Depriving these people of their wages would doubtless be an evil, but is it a greater evil than allowing them to work on at their present occupations, ruin their health and become a burden on society? If there is not work enough for them in this locality, at wages which secure them a decent living, there is work in other places; or even if emigration were impossible, it is very certain that it would be a cheap price for society to pay to support even a large number of individuals of this generation at work on public undertakings, rather than to allow them

to become each the fountain head of new misery and crime, which always springs from degraded humanity. The first English factory act was passed after an epidemic had started from the overcrowding of children in factories.

Of course, the enforcement of these sanitary laws would prevent the subsequent establishment of such poorly paying kinds of business, so that the burden above referred to would at most have to be borne only once for all. The saying is well known, "Abject poverty is the mother of crime." There is a sum in dollars and cents, and, if wages are below that, men are driven to crime and women to shame. Crime is increasing at an alarming ratio. According to Mr. Round, Secretary of the Prison Association of New York, in this city in 1850 the proportion of criminals to the number of inhabitants was 1 in 3,000; in 1870, it was 1 in 1,021; in 1881, it was 1 in 837. According to the same authority, \$480,000,000 are annually paid to protect society from criminals. This item of the expense to society to protect itself against its internal foes is increasing too rapidly to be borne. As a business matter, in order to save money, working men and women must be put in better circumstances. The same can be said of intemperance, the root of which lies in overwork and underpay; alcohol is the cheapest food for giving temporary strength.

Next, let us consider the objection that the stopping of these factories would raise the price of the commodities which they heretofore produced. These commodities would be either articles of luxury or of necessity. If they were articles of luxury, the loss would fall upon the rich, and, in my opinion, anyone who contemplates the increase in luxury, during the last fifty years, will conclude that a certain decrease in that direction can well be borne. If, however, the manufactures were articles of

necessity it is true that their price would rise, and that this would bear hard particularly on the poor. But, if the price of living of all workingmen were raised, while the sanitary and other laws continued to be enforced, the wages of workingmen would have to be raised in proportion. So that the loss would again fall upon the wealthy classes, and would lead them to diminish their expenditures for luxury, which, as above observed, they can, in my opinion, well afford to do, and, perhaps, most of all, to their own profit. Moreover, self-interest directs the community, merely for the sake of decreasing the price of an article to a class of consumers, not to allow employers to reduce the wages of their employees, or to force them to work under such unfavorable circumstances as to unfit them for profitable labor at an early age, and thus compel society to support them and their families.

Of the advantages which would compensate all classes for this sacrifice in artificial luxuries, it is needless to speak in detail; in the words of Ruskin, we would have instead of "cities in which the object of man is not life but labor; cities in which the streets are not the avenues for the passing processions of a happy people, but the drains for the discharge of a tormented mob," cities "whose walls shall be safety, and whose gates shall be praise."

Finally, however, it will occur to many, that we have in late years in this country and abroad passed many laws for the inspection of tenement houses, factories, etc., and yet there has been no corresponding improvement in the condition of the workingmen, if there has been any; that many of these laws remain dead letters or are used by corrupt officials as the means of private emolument; and that consequently we have little reason to suppose that the mere extension of this principle will produce any real benefit to the workingmen or to society at large. In an-

swer to this argument, I would refer to my former paper on "Trade Organizations in Public Affairs or Federalism in Cities," in which I have endeavored to show that the great cause of the mal-administration of our municipal affairs is our adherence to the antiquated and false system of electing our city fathers, legislators and judges of inferior courts from artificial geographical districts, in which the gin-shop influence is certain to be paramount, instead of from the city at large, where the men of all classes might select those who are to make and to enforce their laws according to their untrammelled wishes. So long as this system of artificial divisions of cities remains, with its corrupt ramifications, so long will any extension of the powers of government, even in the interest of humanity and justice, be failures. Consider for a moment the character of the man who now occupies the position of head of our Board of Health; would not those laws be differently enforced if the organizations of employees, for whose protection they are intended, had some direct influence in selecting this official? Governor Seymour well defined self-government (as cited in my paper above referred to) as attempting "to distribute each particular power to those who have the greatest interest in its wise and faithful exercise." Any excessive demands of the workingmen would certainly be met if these demands were publicly discussed by the arguments of the representatives of the employers and of all other interests in the city or State, and would yield before the moral weight of this united opinion; especially as the various classes of workingmen learned that they themselves were consumers as well as producers; and that an increase in the wages of one class meant an increase in the price of the article which that class produced.

No matter how far this principle of justice were carried into economical matters, it would never produce

equality of property. The past is not to be obliterated; different types of men possess different degrees of force and intelligence; the rise and fall of individuals and races must continue; but we can at least by this plan do much to secure to all within our city and State and ultimately within our nation, a much happier and safer life than they lead at present, and as I believe, one that will make all our citizens once more contented and patriotic. Human hands may never build Jerusalem the Golden, but we can give all our fellow-citizens opportunity to live a healthy, moral life here and to prepare themselves for a life in the world to come.







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